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2 Found Guilty in Prison Beating of Pamela Smart

PAMELA SMART

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. (AP) — Choosing to believe the testimony of Pamela Smart despite her tawdry past, a Westchester County jury yesterday convicted two inmates of beating her up in prison.

Mona Graves, 32, and Ghania Miller, 28, were convicted of second-degree assault in an attack at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. Smart, who is serving a life sentence for seducing a young lover into killing her husband, suffered a fractured nose, a broken eye socket and minor hand and knee injuries in the 1996 attack.

When the verdict was announced, Miller collapsed into loud sobs and screeches, nearly drowning out the polling of the jurors. Graves, who had giggled occasionally during the trial, betrayed no emotion. Smart, whose three days of testimony ended Wednesday, was back at the prison.

When the women are sentenced Jan. 8, Judge James Cowhey could add up to seven years to each of their sentences. Graves currently is doing 20 years to life for murder, Miller seven to life on drug charges.

The jury took less than 90 minutes to reach its verdict and apparently ignored the thrust of the closing defense arguments, which was that Smart's 1991 conviction in New Hampshire meant her testimony could not be trusted.

That case spawned the Nicole Kidman movie "To Die For."

Graves' attorney, Ted Brundage, described Smart as "so charming it's almost scary."

"They call her the Ice Princess," he said. "This is the type of person who could provoke the hormones of a 15-year-old boy to kill her husband."

"We're not retrying New Hampshire here," Brundage said, but he repeatedly mentioned the 1990 murder of Gregg Smart.

"She got some kid to do it and didn't dirty her pretty little hands," he said. "She uses other people to do her bidding, and I ask you not to fall into that trap. Don't do the bidding of Pamela Smart."

But prosecutor Russell Seeman told the jury that "The protection of the law does not stop at the prison fence. ... Pamela Smart was not sentenced to be assaulted at Bedford Hills."

He insisted Smart, 30, was telling the truth about being attacked, but added there was enough proof of their guilt even without the victim's testimony.

He denied the defense implication that Smart was "getting some kind of charge, some kind of entertainment" out of the trial. Displaying photos of her injuries, he asked the jurors, "Who was being entertained?"